

The Girl Who Wrote Her Own Fairytale

Lee DeNoya

Angel Dominguez, Illustrator

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The Girl Who Wrote Her Own Fairytale is a sweet bedtime story that imparts earned wisdom from one generation to the next.

In Lee DeNoya's tender illustrated children's book *The Girl Who Wrote Her Own Fairytale*, a girl's wanderlust leads to important life lessons.

Moving at a gentle pace, this rhyming tale begins with a grandmother reading aloud to her inquisitive granddaughter at bedtime. She recounts the story within the story, about the adventures of a girl who was impatient to escape her provincial village and search for excitement.

The girl leaves home with no plan except to realize her full potential for greatness somewhere far away. While this plan sounds treacherous, her journey is tame enough to suit the context: the only devious person whom the girl meets is a strange woman who turns out to be a benign trickster seeking to help her, and the greatest danger the girl faces is missing what could truly make her happy while she searches for a better life. A series of well-meaning strangers share their gifts and wisdom with the girl, instructing her on how to achieve fulfillment.

This introspective, allegorical tale muses on the endless possibilities people encounter, both near and far from home. It's an open-ended exploration, though, sans hints of where the girl will land or what she will end up doing. The strangers whom she meets note that difficulties and pains meet all people; they suggest, in loose terms, that one's journey is more important than their destination. The girl expresses joy because of these realizations, which bring her more contentment than a physical treasure could. The girl remains unnamed throughout, though, suggesting that audiences are meant to imagine themselves in her story. This also leads to lingering questions about whose story the grandmother has told.

Suited most for read-alouds, rather than independent reading, this lyrical, philosophical story is sprinkled with details of the pleasant sights and sounds that the girl experiences. Its sepia-colored pages, decorative borders, and ornate letters make it seem like a tale from long ago, and Angel Dominguez's watercolor illustrations add to this sensibility. Pennants stream from towers; there are cobblestone streets, horse-drawn carts, and knee breeches. Detailed paintings of soaring birds complement the heroine's flight to freedom, capturing the allure of wild, wide-open landscapes.

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BRANDEE GRUENER (October 20, 2021)

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